DIZZY CLINICS
AUSTRALIA

Vestibular Neuritis

What is it?

Vestibular neuritis is a condition where the balance nerve (vestibular nerve) becomes inflamed, usually due to a viral infection. It causes sudden, intense dizziness or vertigo, often without any change in hearing. Vestibular neuritis is one of the most common causes of sudden vertigo. In some cases, it can lead to ongoing imbalance or trigger BPPV later on.

Common symptoms

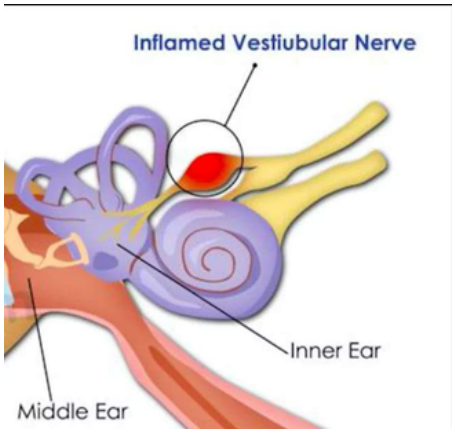
- Sudden, severe vertigo (spinning)
- Nausea and vomiting
- Trouble walking or standing
- Feeling "off balance"
- No hearing loss (unlike labyrinthitis)

Why does it happen?

It's typically triggered by a viral illness (like a cold or flu), which affects the nerve that sends balance signals from the inner ear to the brain. This creates a mismatch between the signals from each ear, leading to a sensation of spinning or severe imbalance.

How is it diagnosed?

Diagnosis is based on symptoms and ruling out other causes like stroke or inner ear disorders. A vestibular physiotherapist or doctor may perform balance and eye movement tests.

What are the treatments?

- Short-term medications (anti-nausea +/- steroids)
- Vestibular rehabilitation to improve balance - **needs to be started ASAP**
- Staying active (even when dizzy) helps the brain adapt
- Regular walking outdoors